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That pure, great light which is radiant; that great glory; that verily which the god's worship; that by means of which the sun shines forth—that eternal divine being is perceived by devotees. The real and the unreal have both the same real entity as their basis. The being who is the inner Self, is not seen, being placed in the heart. Meditating on him, a wise man remains placid.—

Sanatsugatiya.

THE PATH.

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The Poetry of Reincarnation in Western Literature.

PART IV.

Platonic Poets.

The largest inspiration of all Western thought is nourished by the Academe. Not only idealism but the provinces of philosophy and literature hostile to Plato are really indebted to him. The noble loftiness, the etherial subtlety, the poetic beauty of that teaching has captivated most of the fine

intellects of mediæval and modern times and it is impossible to trace the invisible course of exalted thought which has radiated from this greatest Greek, the king of a nation of philosophers.

Adopting Emerson's words "Out of Plato come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought. Great havoc makes he among our originalities. We have reached the mountain from which all these drift boulders were detached. The Bible of the learned for twenty-two centuries, every brisk young man who says fine things to each reluctant generation is some reader of Plato translating into the vernacular his good things * * * How many great men nature is incessantly sending up out of the night to be *his men*—Platonists! the Alexandrians, a constellation of genius; the Elizabethans, not less; Sir Thomas More, Henry More, John Hales, John Smith, Lord Bacon, Jeremy, Taylor, Ralph Cudworth, Sydenham, Thomas Taylor. Calvinism is in his Phaedro. Christianity is in it. Mahometanism draws all its philosophy, in its hand book of morals, the Akhlak-y-Jalaly, from him. Mysticism finds in Plato all its texts." We know not how much of the world's later poetry is due to the suggestion and nurture of the poet-philosopher. But in closing our studies of the poetry of Reincarnation it may be of interest to group together the avowed Platonic poets.

Most illustrious of all the English disciples of this master, in the brilliant coterie of "Cambridge Platonists," was Dr. Henry More whom Dr. Johnson esteemed "one of our greatest divines and philosophers and no mean poet." Hobbes said of him that if his "own philosophy was not true he knew none that he should sooner adopt than Henry More's of Cambridge;" and Hoadley styles him "one of the first men of this or any other country." Coleridge wrote that his philosophical works "contained more enlarged and elevated views of the christian dispensation than I have met with in any other single volume; for More had both the philosophical and poetic genius supported by immense erudition." He was a devout student of Plato. In the heat of rebellion he was spared by the fanatics. They pardoned his refusal to take their covenant and left him to continue the philosophic occupations which had rendered him famous as a loveable and absorbed scholar. He wove together in many poems a quaint texture of Gothic fancy and Greek thought. His "Psychozoia" or "Life of the Soul," from which the following verses are taken is a long Platonic poem tracing the course of the soul through ancient existences down into the earthly realm. Campbell said of this work that it "is like a curious grotto whose labyrinths we might explore for its strange and mystic associations." Dr. More was an intimate friend of Addison and long a correspondent of Descartes.

From Henry More's "Philosophical Poems" (Psychozoia).

I would sing the pre-existency
  Of human souls and live once o'er again
By recollection and quick memory
  All that is passed since first we all began.
But all too shallow be my wits to scan
  So deep a point and mind too dull to climb
So dark a matter. But thou more than man
  Aread, thou sacred soul of Plotin dear
Tell me what mortals are. Tell what of old they were.

A spark or ray of divinity
  Clouded with earthly fogs, and clad in clay
A precious drop sunk from eternity
  Spilt on the ground, or rather slunk away.
For then we fell when we 'gan first t'essay
  By stealth of our own selves something to been
Uncentering ourselves from our one great stay
  Which rupture we new liberty did ween
And from that prank right jolly wits ourselves did deem.

Show fitly how the pre-existing soul
  Enacts and enters bodies here below
And then entire unhurt can leave this moul
  In which by sense and motion they may know
Better than we what things transacted be
  Upon the earth, and when they best may show
Themselves to friend or foe, their phantasmy
  Moulding their airy arc to gross consistency.

Milton imbibed from his college friend Henry More an early fondness for the study of Plato, whose philosophy nourished most of the fine spirits of that day and he expresses the Greek sage's opinion of the soul in his Comus:

The soul grows clotted by oblivion
Imbodies and embrutes till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being;
Such as those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres
Lingering and setting by a new made grave
As loth to leave the body that it loved.

Milton's Platonic proclivities are also shown in his poem "On the Death of a Fair Infant:"

Wert thou that just maid, who once before
Forsook the hated earth, O tell me sooth,
And came'st again to visit us once more?
Or were thou that sweet smiling youth?
  Or any other of that heavenly brood
Let down in cloudy throne to do the world some good?

Or wert thou of the golden-winged host,
Who having clad thyself in human weed,
To earth from thy prefixed seat did'st post,
And after short abode fly back with speed
As if to show what creatures heaven doth breed.
Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the sordid world and unto heaven aspire.

In the old library of poetry known as Dodsley's Collection, is a Miltonic poem by an anonymous Platonist which is very interesting and as it is difficult of access we quote the best part of it :

PRE-EXISTENCE.

IN IMITATION OF MILTON.

Now had th' archangel trumpet, raised sublime
Above the walls of heaven, begun to sound ;
All æther took the blast and fell beneath
Shook with celestial noise ; th' almighty host
Hot with pursuit, and reeking with the blood
Of guilty cherubs smeared in sulphurous dust,
Pause at the known command of sounding gold.
At first they close the wide Tartarian gates,
Th' impenetrable folds on brazen hinge
Roll creaking horrible ; the din beneath
O'ercomes the war of flames, and deafens hell.
Then through the solid gloom with nimble wing
They cut their shining traces up to light ;
Returned upon the edge of heavenly day
Where thinnest beams play round the vast obscure
And with eternal gleam drives back the night.
They find the troops less stubborn, less involved
In crime and ruin, barr'd the realms of peace,
Yet uncondemned to baleful beats of woe,
Doubtful and suppliant ; all the plumes of light
Moult from their shuddering wings, and sickly fear
Shades every face with horror ; conscious guilt
Rolls in the livid eye-ball, and each breast
Shakes with the dread of future doom unknown.
'Tis here the wide circumference of heaven
Opens in two vast gates, that inward turn
Volumnious, on jasper columns hung
By geometry divine ; they ever glow
With living sculptures, they arise by turns
To imboss the shining leaves, by turns they set
To give succeeding argument their place ;
In holy hieroglyphics on they move,
The gaze of journeying angels, as they pass
Oft looking back, and held in deep surprise.
Here stood the troops distinct ; the cherub guard

Unbarred the splendid gates, and in they roll
Harmonious; for a vocal spirit sits
Within each hinge, and as they onward drive,
In just divisions breaks the numerous jars
With symphony melodious, such as spheres
Involved in tenfold wreaths are said to sound.
Out flows a blaze of glory: for on high
Towering advanced the moving throne of God.
Above the throne, th' ideas heavenly bright
Of past, of present, and of coming time,
Fixed their immoved abode, and there present
An endless landscape of created things
To sight celestial, where angelic eyes
Are lost in prospect; for the shiny range
Boundless and various in its bosom bears
Millions of full proportioned worlds, beheld
With steadfast eyes, till more arise to view,
And further inward scenes start up unknown.

A vocal thunder rolled the voice of God
Servants of God! and virtues great in arms
We approve your faithful works, and you return
Blessed from the dire pursuits of rebel foes;
Resolved, obdurant, they have tried the force
Of this right hand, and known almighty power;
Transfixed with lightning down they sunk and fell
Into the fiery gulf and deep they plunge
Below the burning waves, to hide their heads.

For you, ye guilty throng that lately joined
In this sedition, since seduced from good,
And caught in trains of guile, by sprites malign
Superior in their order; you accept,
Trembling, my heavenly clemency and grace.
When the long era once has filled its orb,
You shall emerge to light and humbly here
Again shall bow before his favoring throne,
If your own virtue second my decree:
But all must have their races first below.
See, where below in chaos wondrous deep
A speck of light dawns forth, and thence throughout
The shades, in many a wreath, my forming power
There swiftly turns the burning eddy round,
Absorbing all crude matter near its brink;
Which next, with subtle motions, takes the form
I please to stamp, the seed of embryo worlds
All now in embryo, but ere long shall rise
Variously scattered in this vast expanse,
Involved in winding orbs, until the brims
Of outward circles brush the heavenly gates.
The middle point a globe of curling fire
Shall hold, which round it sheds its genial heat;

Where'er I kindle life the motion grows.
In all the endless orbs, from this machine ;
And infinite vicissitudes that roll
About the restless center ; for I rear
In those meanders turned, a dusty ball,
Deformed all o'er with woods, whose shaggy tops
Inclose eternal mists, and deadly damps
Hover within their boughs, to cloak the light ;
Impervious scenes of horror, till reformed
To fields and grassy dells and flowery meads
By your continual pains. Here Silence sits
In folds of wreathy mantling sunk obscure,
And in dark fumes bending his drowsy head ;
An urn he holds, from whence a lake proceeds
Wide, flowing gently, smooth and Lethe named ;
Hither compelled, each soul must drink long draughts
Of those forgetful streams, till forms within
And all the great ideas fade and die :
For if vast thought should play about a mind
Inclosed in flesh, and dragging cumbrous life,
Fluttering and beating in the mournful cage,
It soon would break its gates and wing away :
'Tis therefore my decree, the soul return
Naked from off this beach, and perfect blank
To visit the new world ; and wait to feel
Itself in crude consistence closely shut,
The dreadful monument of just revenge ;
Immured by heaven's own hand, and placed erect
On fleeting matter all imprisoned round
With walls of clay ; the etherial mould shall bear
The chain of members, deafened with an ear,
Blinded by eyes, and trammeled by hands,
Here anger, vast ambition and disdain,
And all the haughty movements rise and fall,
As storms of neighboring atoms tear the soul,
And hope and love and all the calmer turns
Of easy hours, in their gay gilded shapes,
With sudden run, skim o'er deluded minds,
As matter leads the dance ; but one desire
Unsatisfied, shall mar ten thousand joys.
The rank of beings, that shall first advance
Drink deep of human life ; and long shall stay
On this great scene of cares. From all the rest
That longer for the destined body wait,
Less penance I expect, and short abode
In those pale dreamy kingdoms will content ;
Each has his lamentable lot and all
On different rocks abide the pains of life.
The pensive spirit takes the lonely grove ;
Nightly he visits all the sylvan scenes,

Where far remote, a melancholy moon
Raising her head, serene and shorn of beams,
Throws here and there her glimmerings through the trees.
The sage shall haunt this solitary ground
And view the dismal landscape limned within
In horrid shades, mixed with imperfect light.
Here Judgment, blinded by delusive sense,
Contracted through the cranny of an eye,
Shoots up faint languid beams to that dark seat,
Wherein the soul, bereaved of native fire,
Sets intricate, in misty clouds obscured.
  Hence far removed, a different being race
In cities full and frequent take their seat,
Where honour's crushed, and gratitude oppressed
With swelling hopes of gain, that raise within
A tempest, and driven onward by success,
Can find no bounds. For creatures of a day
Stretch their wide cares to ages ; full increase
Starves their penurious soul, while empty sound
Fills the ambitious ; *that* shall ever shrink,
Pining with endless cares, while *this* shall swell
To tympany enormous. Bright in arms
Here shines the hero, out he fiercely leads
A martial throng, his instruments of rage,
To fill the world with death, and thin mankind.
There savage nature in one common lies
And feels its share of hunger, care and pain,
Cheated by flying prey ; and now they tear
Their panting flesh ; and deeply, darkly quaff
Of human woe, even when they rudely sip
The flowing stream, or draw the savory pulp
Of nature's freshest viands ; fragrant fruits
Enjoyed with trembling, and in danger sought.
  But where the appointed limits of a law
Fences the general safety of the world,
No greater quiet reigns ; the blended loads
Of punishment and crime deform the world,
And give no rest to man ; with pangs and throes
He enters on the stage ; prophetic tears
And infant cries prelude his future woes ;
And all is one continual scene of gulf
Till the sad sable curtain falls in death.
  Then the gay glories of the living world
Shall cast their empty varnish and retire
Out of his feeble views ; the shapeless root
Of wild immagination dance and play
Before his eyes obscure ; till all in death
Shall vanish, and the prisoner enlarged,
Regains the flaming borders of the sky.
  He ended. Peals of thunder rend the heavens,

And chaos, from the bottom turned, resounds.
The mighty clangor ; all the heavenly host
Approve the high decree, and loud they sing
Eternal justice ; while the guilty troops,
Sad with their doom, but sad without despair,
Fall fluttering down to Lethe's lake and there
For penance, and the destined body wait.

Shelley's Platonic leanings are well known. The favorite Greek conceit of pre-existence in many earlier lives may frequently be found in other poems besides the "Prometheus Unbound" quoted in part II of our series.

The last stanza of "The Cloud," is Shelly's Platonic symbol of human life :

I am the daughter of earth and water
And the nursling of the sky
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph
And out of the caverns of rain
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

Another poem entitled "A Fragment," certainly refers to pre-existence:

Ye gentle visitants of calm thought
Moods like the memories of happier earth
Which come arrayed in thoughts of little worth
Like stars in clouds by weak winds enwrought.

Coleridge has embodied his Platonic view of pre-existence in this sonnet, "Composed on a homeward journey ; the author having received intelligence of the birth of a son":

Oft o'er my brain does that strange fancy roll
Which makes the present (while the flash doth last)
Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
Mixed with such feelings as perplex the soul
Self questioned in her sleep ; and some have said
We lived, ere yet this robe of flesh we wore.
O my sweet baby ! when I reach my door
If heavy looks should tell me thou art dead
(As sometimes through excess of hope, I fear)
I think that I should struggle to believe
Thou wert a spirit, to this nether sphere
Sentenced for some more venial crime to grieve ;
Did'st scream, then spring to meet Heaven's quick reprieve,
While we wept idly o'er the little bier.

In Emerson, the Plato of the nineteenth century, the whole feeling of the Greek seems reflected in its most glorious development. Many of his poems clearly suggest the influence of his Greek teacher, as his "Threnody" upon the death of his young son, and "The Sphinx" in which these two stanzas appear:

To vision profounder
Man's spirit must dive;
His aye-rolling orb
At no goal wilt arrive;
The heavens that now draw him
With sweetness untold
Once found for new heavens
He spurneth the old.

Eterne alteration
Now follows, now flies
And under pain, pleasure,—
Under pleasure, pain lies.
Love works at the centre,
Heart-heaving alway;
Forth speed the strong pulses
To the borders of day.

Many of the church hymns glow with the enthusiasm of Platonic pre-existence, and are fondly sung by Christians without any thought that, while their idea is of Biblical origin, it has been nourished and perpetuated by the Greek sage, and directly implies reincarnation. For instance:

"I'm but a stranger here, heaven is my home."
"Heaven is my fatherland, heaven is my home."

Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe, the friend of Bishop Ken and of Dr. Isaac Watts, has left this allusion to pre-existence in

A HYMN ON HEAVEN.

Ye starry mansions, hail! my native skies
Here in my happy, pre-existent state
(A spotless mind) I led the life of Gods,
But passing, I salute you, and advance
To yonder brighter realms, allowed access,
Hail, splendid city of the almighty king
Celestial salem, situate above, &c.

E. D. WALKER.

NATURE'S SCHOLAR.

There was once an old Scholar who counted his friends by scores in his youth, and had now mislaid or lost them. Early in life he had wandered away from men and things to seek the Truth, and journeyed very far in his search, coming at last to an inheritance of little land and much learning, left him by an antiquarian ancestor. Deep down in quiet country dales he lived upon dreams and moldy books, well loved by all about him, for he never knew the current rates of wage or purchase, nor yet when maids hung gossipping over hedges, and dinner burned in the oven. The simple folk of the country side had their own way with him whom they called "the poor dear soul" and cherished as their own backbone, never letting any man out of their own township serve or despoil him, so much they felt they owed him. Some went so far in gratitude as to say he was not near so old

as he looked, for if his hair *was* grey, there were firm, bright eyes and sturdy calves to give age the lie and maintain it. Moreover, the time a band passed through the village, he had been espied by Molly through the door chink, striding up and down, whistling as loud as any boy and cutting the air with his cane in a style far beyond the drum-major. It was the kitchen verdict that he must have been "shocking bad" in his youth; his dinner was done to a turn that night and the maids had new ribbands in their caps and arch provocation on their faces.

Be his age what it might, day after day the Scholar read and wrote, or slowly paced his rustic walks, now amid rose blooms, now upon the sere rustle of leaves or crunch of snow, but always with a faithful old hound to heel on his right, whose head hung low like the master's. Nothing breathed on that homestead that did not seem to have greater right there than the Scholar: the very toads and lizards sat and swelled for pride of ownership in mossy nooks on his walk, and busy winter birds stood still at his approach, and pecked briskly at the brown boughs won by sun from ice, knowing well that not even creeping things had ever seen cause to turn aside for him. One hoary spider had indeed been seen to think the Scholar would learn more if he took some notice of creatures, but everyone knows that since Bruce introduced a spider to history, the tribe has been hypercritical of the insufficient methods of man. It is certain that the Scholar considered himself a mere sojourner there where he was master, and meant to return to anxious friends when he could carry the Truth to them. But the great tomes of his legacy were many and wise; still he lingered, still he sought, while Time went tiptoe past him.

One morning, as he wrote, a caprice of the Spring wind burst open the study casement. A gush of wild-wood fragrance and the shrill lilt of a girl's voice in song flooded into the room together. Some subtle quality of the voice made him throw down his pen and glance at a picture on his table. From beneath its coating of dust a merry brown eye laughed out at him and a round shoulder gleamed whitely. Taking up this picture, he polished it remorsefully with his worn coat cuff, muttering like one asleep: "Poor Kate! I have kept her waiting long. I cannot give myself to happiness or woman, until I find the Truth."

Straightway upon this came a miracle! His door swung open. There upon his threshold, young and rosy, lap and hair full of blossoms, face full of dimples, stood Kate herself. As the man's eye went from the picture to the woman, the man's heart leaped up hot and strong. He dropped the painted thing and caught the living beauty in his arms. "My Kate! you have waited for me!" Small chance has Truth with her own at times, when velvety cheek is so near and the springtide is yet young!

What said the beauty? She laughed again, and kissed him with the

careless, cruel, kindness of youth to age. "Yes, we waited and rang till we were tired, so I came on to explore. Awfully nice of you to know me!"

"But Kate"—he stammered.

"Harriet. I'm not named for Mamma," she rattled on. "Mamma's out there with Papa and the children."

"Children?" gasped the Scholar.

"Yes. Ten, besides me. Don't you hear them?"

Surely he heard them. Ten! they sounded like legions. The mere pursuit of truth is at once a recompense and a protection! Yet even a votary is vulnerable when a young girl goes on to say: "Let me call them, you'll sprain yourself, rushing about so. I shook your nerves; see how your hand trembles."

No wonder, poor Scholar. In that moment he looked double his age, for he—long unacquainted with mirrors—saw for the first time his stooping shoulders, his crows-feet and wrinkles, reflected in her blithe indifference, her attention wandering from him to his surroundings. His dead youth rose up with power, and stared him in the face; then fell away from his heart in ashes.

That heart was staunch though, as are the hearts of those who seek the Truth, so by the time his guests stepped beneath his roof, he stood ready to welcome them with gentle courtesy—his Kate, grown portly, but fresh and good-humored still, and secretly flattered to see, (as she did with the tail of her eye) her portrait so cleanly kept when all else was so dusty, and hoping her husband would not remark it. Her husband, (who would not have cared if he had, she having tapped his single vein of sentiment and run it dry,) a grave, cautious Scientist: a friend of his, a Speculator, attracted by unlikeness, whose sharp glance bestowed a hypothetical value wherever it fell: these and other friends had hunted the Scholar up to renew old ties in his country home, seeing which, the very cockles of his heart warmed to them. Soon milk was foaming into pails; sounds of beating and churning and frothing arose. Maids scurried in all directions. Slugs disturbed on young green things, and cackling hens in angry session on the barn floor, alike averred that never had such an evil day befallen poultry yard and kitchen garden. "Humph" snarled old Peter: "me airly salad he should not have, an' me meanin' to sell it in market the Saturday, but for his bein' the boss, dang him!" To which Cook replied with much feeling that "Lord knows, I ain't never before seen the poor, dear gentleman ask for his own." Peter glared at her. "Woman! That's just what I am objectin' to. It's the first time makes the *precydent*. He's got the *precydent* on us now," with which mysterious omen hanging over her, Cook retired to her pans and sauces.

The day passed all too quickly, and when the hour for departure came

round, the Scholar was so reluctant to part with his friends that he bethought him of making a gift to every one, that some portion of himself might go with them. Gathering them about him, he begged that each would tell him what they had liked best in his home, adding—the wily old Scholar! —that then these things might serve to remind him of friends, and perhaps smile at him in their absence. They were very worldly wise people, however, coming from the city beyond the hills, that city whose knowing lights outwinked the stars, whose mists denied a right of way to the sun himself. So perhaps they saw through his cunning, for all hung back until he said to the Artist: 'Come Sir; you have praised my homestead much. What will you crown with your final approbation e're you leave me?"

The Artist could but smile back into the genial face bending towards him. "Why, Sir, the fairest thing you own is one that in itself contains the true rules of all Art. It is as blue as the heavens, and like them, a living lesson in gradation of color, and its form displays the perfect 'line of beauty.'"

The Scholar's gaze sought the dark cabinets on his walls, each rich with its own freight, but the Scientist spoke up with decision. "On the contrary, the finest thing our friend possesses is colorless, formless; its beauty is its utility: its protean energy is a fountain of Power."

"Learning and Art are all very good," chirrupped the speculator, flecking off his eyeglass. "But if ever you chance to be hard up, let me choose what possession of yours shall be put upon the market, and you shall pocket its attractions—less commission—in more cash than anything else I see is likely to bring you."

A swift cloud of deprecation passed over the company, as when a breeze ruffles a grainfield and there is a stir, a rustle and a withdrawal from the rude intruder. The Scholar's cheek even reddened slightly, seeing which, the Poet hastened to staunch the wound, as is the royal prerogative of poets. "Sir," said he, "you have here an instrument of wonderful sweetness. It tunes ear and brain alike to the sweetest harmonies, and though I must leave it, I take its music with me, captured in my latest song, and all the world shall sing it."

He was a famous Poet, so the rest hastened to agree with him. "As for me," said a youth, gazing ardently at Harriet; "what I admired most was an image of the loveliest woman God ever made; what I envy most seemed to hold her in its arms, and these were one thing."

"And I," said a reproachful youth whom she had jilted, "I liked the one thing that cannot be trampled upon, nor does it change and grow out of knowledge, like the fickle world around us."

"Fancy! Now for my part the jolliest thing here is always changing, never the same. It's a racer! No women for me!" So spoke the Dandy

whom Harriet secretly loved. Stung, she turned away to hide her palpitating bosom, but flung a dart behind her, as girls will. "Diamonds," cried she, "give me our host's ancestral diamonds. Larger ones I never saw. Brilliants! Glorious! such quantities. My heart is set on having just such stones."

Her lovers stroked their callow chins and thought of their salaries, but before the puzzled Scholar could ask for an explanation, her mother took his hand, saying plaintively, "My good friend, next to yourself, what I value most is none of these things they name, but just something in your dairy which makes yours the sweetest cream and butter I ever tasted. How my poor children ever grow up on city fare, a merciful heaven only knows."

Everyone laughed at this touching idea, for just then the "poor children" rushed up with a loud rumble, as of thunder, and precipitated themselves upon the Scholar. The one at the rear, who still had some breath remaining, shouted out; "We never saw such a splendid stream. Don't we wish we had it at home." Their host was about to confess that he had never noticed it, when his voice was drowned in a general exclamation from all the grown people in one breath: "That was what I meant too; it is the stream yonder!"

The astonished Scholar turned to look at his choicest possession, now rosy under the setting sun. Its cascade swept down in a serpentine curve, while part of the water writhed backward from the lip of the fall, making a spiral within a spiral in strange double movement; an ebb and a flow. Below the outpour of life-giving water, six eddies swirled away, each in its own circle, but interlinked by a current that emptied itself in a larger whirlpool further down. The little wind that rises out of the east at nightfall in the spring, struck coldly across this boiling vortex, condensing its foam into a silvery mist that gathered, rose, took on a graceful wraithlike shape, and floated away, a freed thing to the free ether. The Scholar drew himself up in sudden excitement and wonder, then these words burst from him in a torrent strangely unlike the calm evenness of his accustomed speech. "At last! At last I have found the secret. See"—and he pointed to the cascade—"there is the movement that creates life; it circles through the eddies and out of the whirlpool evolves the new-born life itself, the immortal that seeks the skies. Rejoice with me!"

The tears ran down his cheek, but his voice rang like a bugle and his form had a majesty they could not understand. They fell back a few paces. Their mirth was extinguished, their manners constrained. Like guilty hearts they made hasty farewells, avoiding his eye: their thanks fell crisp and cool on the air, like frost. While still their footsteps pressed his land, drowsy birds in the hedges saw them put heads close together in the shadows and whisper furtively, "Mad! He is mad. What will people say? We

will never come again." The branches, closing behind them with a shudder, shed a soft rain of blossoms to obliterate their presence; then twining closer, shut the Scholar forever away from the world and its friends.

Lost in an ecstasy, he stood by the hurrying waters. A Voice called to him from somewhere; a Voice of airy mystery; a soundless but almighty Voice, so that he trembled as he answered, "Lord, here am I."

"Seest thou not, oh, Seeker," said the Voice, "that though Truth wears different garb to different men, it is but the livery of their own minds; beneath it is the One Truth that mirrors forth all the rest, changeless and resplendent under as many names as there are men? It is to be found in all things in Nature, even as the water is in all things: men pursue its splendor blindfold through the worlds, to find it shining beside their own door."

"And thou, who art thou?" asked the Scholar.

"*I am that Spirit which moves above the face of the waters. With Truth I dwell in her supreme abode. Seek me there.*"

An awful thrill, half fear, half joy ran through the hearer's breast, for these last words resounded from the deeps of his heart. Then he knew the supreme abode of Truth and worshipping in it, he became Nature's Scholar, and she made him young again with that youth which men call Immortality.

J. Campbell Ver Planck, F. T. S.

Astral Intoxigation.

There is such a thing as being intoxicated in the course of an unwise pursuit of what we erroneously imagine is spirituality. In the Christian Bible it is very wisely directed to "prove all" and to hold only to that which is good; this advice is just as important to the student of occultism who thinks that he has separated himself from those "inferior" people engaged either in following a dogma or in tipping tables for messages from deceased relatives—or enemies—as it is to spiritists who believe in the "summerland" and "returning spirits."

The placid surface of the sea of spirit is the only mirror in which can be caught undisturbed the reflections of spiritual things. When a student starts upon the path and begins to see spots of light flash out now and then, or balls of golden fire roll past him, it does not mean that he is beginning to see the real Self—pure spirit. A moment of deepest peace or wonderful

revealings given to the student, is *not* the awful moment when one is about to see his spiritual guide, much less his own soul. Nor are psychical splashes of blue flame, nor visions of things that afterwards come to pass, nor sights of small sections of the astral light with its wonderful photographs of past or future, nor the sudden ringing of distant fairy-like bells, any proof that you are cultivating spirituality. These things, and still more curious things, will occur when you have passed a little distance on the way, but they are only the mere outposts of a new land which is itself wholly material, and only one remove from the plane of gross physical consciousness.

The liability to be carried off and intoxicated by these phenomena is to be guarded against. We should watch, note and discriminate in all these cases ; place them down for future reference, to be related to some law, or for comparison with other circumstances of a like sort. The power that Nature has of deluding us is endless, and if we stop at these matters she will let us go no further. It is not that any person or power in nature has declared that if we do so and so we must stop, but when one is carried off by what Böehme calls "God's wonders," the result is an intoxication that produces confusion of the intellect. Were one, for instance, to regard every picture seen in the astral light as a spiritual experience, he might truly after a while brook no contradiction upon the subject, but that would be merely because he was drunk with this kind of wine. While he proceeded with his indulgence and neglected his true progress, which is always dependent upon his purity of motive and conquest of his known or ascertainable defects, nature went on accumulating the store of illusory appearances with which he satiated himself.

It is certain that any student who devotes himself to these astral happenings will see them increase. But were our whole life devoted to and rewarded by an enormous succession of phenomena, it is also equally certain that the casting off of the body would be the end of all that sort of experience, without our having added really anything to our stock of true knowledge.

The astral plane, which is the same as that of our psychic senses, is as full of strange sights and sounds as an untrodden South American forest, and has to be well understood before the student can stay there long without danger. While we can overcome the dangers of a forest by the use of human inventions, whose entire object is the physical destruction of the noxious things encountered there, we have no such aids when treading the astral labyrinth. We may be physically brave and say that no fear can enter into us, but no untrained or merely curious seeker is able to say just what effect will result to his outer senses from the attack or influence encountered by the psychical senses.

And the person who revolves selfishly around himself as a center is in greater danger of delusion than any one else, for he has not the assistance that comes from being united in thought with all other sincere seekers. One may stand in a dark house where none of the objects can be distinguished and quite plainly see all that is illuminated outside; in the same way we can see from out of the blackness of our own house—our hearts—the objects now and then illuminated outside by the astral light; but we gain nothing. We must first dispel the *inner* darkness before trying to see into the darkness without; we must *know ourselves* before knowing things extraneous to ourselves.

This is not the road that seems easiest to students. Most of them find it far pleasanter and as they think faster, work, to look on all these outside allurements, and to cultivate all psychic senses, to the exclusion of real spiritual work.

The true road is plain and easy to find, it is so easy that very many would-be students miss it because they cannot believe it to be so simple.

"The way lies through the heart";
Ask there and wander not;
Knock loud, nor hesitate
Because at first the sounds
Reverberating, seem to mock thee.
Nor, when the door swings wide,
Revealing shadows black as night,
Must thou recoil.
Within, the Master's messengers
Have waited patiently:
That Master is Thyself!

Thoughts in Solitude.

VIII.

What is known in the present day under the name of Theosophy, as has repeatedly been stated, is the primary truth which all the religions of the world alike have enshrined—it may be regarded as the kernel of which the religions have been the husks, and it would seem that in the development of this idea, and in the comparison of the objects aimed at by the various religions and by Theosophy, that we shall best realize the stupendous scope and importance of this divine hidden wisdom.

While some of the religions may have been more transparent husks than others through which the kernel of the wisdom of the ages might be dimly visioned, in other words, while some may contain vague hints of

the wider horizon and the more transcendent heights of being, it may generally be stated without making invidious distinctions that the religions of the world as a rule have concerned themselves almost exclusively with the present earth life and the life lying immediately beyond. It is with the rewards and punishments of this state in the immediate future, and with the moral or virtuous thoughts and actions of the present life, which are supposed to be the means of meriting the former and of avoiding the latter, that the priesthoods and the teachers of religion have principally dealt. Indeed, so engrossed in the pursuit of worldly objects have the priesthoods of some religions become that the wider horizon has been completely lost by them.

While the quality of spirituality is but feebly developed in mankind, while the occupations and aims of this present earth life continue to absorb so very much the greater part of the energy of men, and while the intellectual development of those who have some dim perception of a higher state has still to achieve its period of blossom, the different religions adopted by the various races of men will continue to supply the required needs. But there are a few in each country who have risen above the prevailing level—the forerunners we take it of the mighty coming race, and their numbers are being daily added to—men of thought and feeling who through pain and inward struggle have emancipated themselves from the deadly bonds of superstition, and who have at the same time been too great hearted to fall into the still deadlier grip of the opposing faction that usurps the name of science, and that parades its little aims under the denial of all that is most sacred in humanity—men who by intense imaginative power have grasped and realized all that this life has to give, and have been forced to put it by as failing to satisfy their highest aspirations. For such men the Theosophic advent has been a true Eirenicon. No longer bounded by the dimly imaged heaven which superstitious ignorance stretched into eternity, all life now lies before the impartial student of nature in logical order. The law of absolute justice under the name of Karma, which follows with impartial reward or retribution every act, every word and every thought, is now recognized alike as satisfying the moral conscience of the religious man, and as extending over the whole horizon of man's nature the inevitable sequence of cause and effect which the scientists have shown to exist in the material world; while in marked contrast alike to the agnostic acceptance of annihilation, and to the diabolic theory of the arbitrary awardment of eternal bliss or eternal misery to the poor struggling mortals, who after a short life time of 70 or 80 years are surely unlikely to be deserving of either, the picture is completed by the steady progress and evolution of the soul through the continually repeated vicisitudes of earthly life—alternated and relieved by the blissful dreams of heaven where the infinite variety of

human character will through æons of time reap in subtle distinction that which is the due of each.

The objects of the Theosophical Society may be stated as twofold. Firstly to act as a counter movement alike to the decaying but still lingering superstitions, and still more to the rampant and growing materialism of the present day, and the best way to attain this first object is surely to give to the world such a system of thought as may help to explain the mysteries of life. Such a system as will at once satisfy man's logical requirements, his moral feeling of fitness, and his highest spiritual aspirations. And where will such a system be found as in the doctrines Theosophy teaches? The second and main object to which the first leads up, is to act as a guide to the pathway of deliverance by which man may escape from the alternating miseries of birth and death, and attain the one permanent state of Being. This is the great—the divine—secret—to be bound no longer in conditioned existence—to merge the manhood in the Godhead! To catch a glimpse of one of the thousand states of ecstatic being that lie in infinite gradation between us and that stupendous goal would blind us with excess of light. Surely then the only figure before the mind when whispering in worshiping awe of that ineffable state of being should be the kneeling angel with head bent low, and wings crossed before the face.

While a large and increasing number are likely to be influenced by the teachings of Theosophy towards more tolerant and wider views of life, the number of those who will feel impelled to attempt the great undertaking will not probably in this age of darkness be relatively large. But indeed it is not a matter of choice, the destiny of each guides unerringly in the path he is bound to tread, the good within drives and will drive in ways that we know not of. The deep depression or the cutting sorrow of former years may pass away, the torture may take a more subtle form, but while the wings are yet too weak to soar for long in the heavenly air, the detachment from earthly things is bound to bear its first fruits of pain, and the heart will still remain steadily crushed between the upper and the nether millstones. When the aimlessness of this life has made itself felt, to the exclusion of all other thought, to escape from its desolating curse must seem the one object worthy of accomplishment. The converging lines of Karma must doubtless have led those who feel impelled to scale the transcendent heights, compared with which the most soaring ambition of earthly life sinks into nothingness, but in weak-kneed moments to be thrust on such a path of greatness is felt to be a pathetic destiny, a forlorn hope, truly forlorn if the present life alone is regarded, but it is a forlorn hope that *has* to be led.

To realize with vivid distinctness the inanity of all earthly bliss, and yet to catch no refreshing glimpse of the beatific vision; to taste no strengthening sip of the heavenly Amrit, this is indeed a desolateness

without any parallel in worldly life, it is the "indescribable vacuum" of the heart, so well pictured in an article in the June *Theosophist* entitled "Divine Heartache." But as the writer there goes on to describe in words which recall St. John of the Cross's "Obscure Night of the Soul" the apparent contraction of the heart is caused by the divine fire which is driving out its rheum and filthy moisture, and is but a prelude to the ultimate expansion. St. Thomas à Kempis, also dwells on the trouble of mind the disciple must learn to bear, and points out that "to be in a state of great devotion and sweetness" is not advantageous "for it is not by these things that a true lover of virtue is known, nor doth the spiritual progress and perfection of a man consist in these things."

It is written, "He that hath put aside woman hath put aside the world" and this would seem to be the best illustration of that final detachment which is the prelude to the first step on the path to higher things. The different earthly desires from that of mere animal comfort up to the most ideal love, have all got characteristics that blend into each other, but earthly desire at every turn has to be fought and conquered, or put in other words it is a continual raising of the object of desire, either through the failure of realization or through the satiety that comes of realization. It may have required the experience of many incarnations to weed out of the heart the desire for wealth, for title, for power, for consideration among men, at each death of the body a step may have been gained, and the object of desire raised a degree in nobility, until its culmination is reached in the desire for the ideal union, the true marriage of the soul, to which the bodily union is but a subsidiary supplement. The intensity of a fruitless passion if kept undegraded by any acceptance of a lower love, if steadily nursed through a whole life-time as the one thing worthy of achievement, may have alchemical force enough to transmute this love into what it already resembles, the still loftier and purer love of the Universal Soul. "Woman" may have been "put aside" and the ideal union as a tangible reality in this life despaired of—in moments of enthusiasm the earthly love may appear totally eclipsed by the heavenly—but while lungs fit to breathe the heavenly ether are still undeveloped, descents have to be made to the lower air, the old hopes of love rise again in the breast though more faintly, and the old torture is gone through again.

But if the ultimate goal is steadily kept before the mind's eye, each pang that has been endured should have given added strength. The goad that drives each man to higher things is deep seated in his being, and must remain so through life until it ceases to be a goad at all by the conquest of the special desire against which it was directed, and if only we bear in mind that it is a matter of small moment whether or not we attain our earthly desires, and that the one thing important is to follow loyally what at the

time seems to us highest and worthiest—though that highest and worthiest ideal is ever moving upwards—periods of peace and satisfaction are bound to come at last, and we may repeat with Sidney

"Leave me, O Love, that reachest but to dust ;
"And thou my mind aspire to higher things ;
"Grow rich in that which never taketh rust ;
"Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.

* * * * * *

"Then farewell World ! thy uttermost I see
"Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me ! "

PILGRIM.

SOME TEACHINGS OF A GERMAN MYSTIC.

III.

THE CAPTAIN'S DOUBLE.

[FROM THE GERMAN OF J. KERNNING.]

A certain Captain von Härdteck, of the sixth regiment of the line, at P**rch* had a remarkable experience. His parents sent him to the military academy, although he had shown no special inclination for an army career. Nevertheless he adapted himself very well to his calling. He was diligent, was scrupulously attentive to his duties, and on entering active service he was particularly favored, so that his promotion was hastened. He soon became a captain, and then for the first time he began to reflect upon the conditions of his profession. "It is difficult," he once said to himself, "to unite the true man with the soldier, inasmuch as the latter, too severely bound to forms, very easily loses himself in them and holds them for the essential. But even when the forms are strict, the heart must be yielding and humane if one is not to oppose himself to the first law of human nature."

Amid such reflections, and with the most scrupulous attention to his duties, he had passed three years as captain, when he began to feel a strange sensation internally and upon his head.

"What is that?" he thought ; "are my broodings injuring my health or confusing my understanding?" He examined himself closely, but found nothing that could cause concern. One evening when alone in his room he seemed to feel a presence at his side. He looked, but that which he thought to see turned backwards as he turned. He looked straight forward again and behold, at his side there stood a figure which, with some

exertion, by turning only his eyes and not his head, he recognized as the image of himself!

He could not repress an involuntary shudder and he fled from the chamber to rid himself of his strange companion. Outside the house, he saw the figure no more but he continually seemed to feel its presence. "What shall come of this?" he thought; "I am not a Sunday child that sees ghosts!"

The next day, at the same hour, the apparition came again, but this time much plainer than before. When he sat down, it sat beside him; when he paced the room it accompanied him; and when he stood still it stood still also.

"This is no illusion!" he cried, "for I am conscious of everything else. What shall I do? In whom confide? nobody will believe me; they would even ridicule me. I must keep my own counsel and, though the case is a strange one, can do nothing more than meet it with manly courage."

Captain von Härdteck had long been betrothed to Fräulein von Blum but could not obtain permission to marry. He had sent a third petition to the ministry of war and was daily looking for an answer. Three days afterwards the colonel of his regiment came to him at dress parade and congratulated him on his speedy marriage. "The permission of the King," said he, "has arrived! in an hour, at the furthest, you will receive it and all the hindrances that stood in your way will be removed."

In his strange situation this news did not cause him such joy as it formerly would have done, for it was his duty to inform his betrothed of his peculiar condition, and he was doubtful how it would be received. "Heretofore," he thought, "my happiness has been delayed by earthly circumstances; and now heaven, or at least a spiritual being, comes in my way." With faint heart he set out to see his beloved one. What he feared, happened; she was horrified to learn of his ghostly companion and begged for time to reflect and consult her parents. Härdteck parted from her in sorrow and said, "My heart loves sincerely and were you in my place I would not hesitate; I will not complain, however, but will hope that your heart will conquer fear."

He passed two anxious days in uncertainty. On the third he received from the father of his beloved a letter which said that under the circumstances the proposed marriage could not take place. He was sorry to give an honorable man such an answer, but his love for his daughter compelled him to; he would count upon the uprightness of the captain and hoped their friendly relations would not be broken off.

Härdteck read the letter with silent resignation and said at last: "It is not my destiny to be happy; I must bear this loss, heavy though it be."

The King's permission and the intended marriage were generally known and everybody wondered that the affair should come to an end at the moment of fulfillment. The officers of the regiment took it as an insult to their comrade and demanded satisfaction of the young lady's father. The colonel himself summoned the captain and questioned him about the matter. Härdteck declared that he alone was to blame; something had happened to him which he could not disclose. The colonel begged him to give him some kind of a reason in order to pacify the other officers. After a struggle with himself the captain confessed that for some time a ghost had been at his side and refused to leave him. The young lady, when informed of this extraordinary circumstance, could not master her fear and therefore the engagement had been broken off.

The colonel gazed in astonishment. "Ghost? nonsense!" he exclaimed. "That is a notion which you have hatched out in your lonesome life, and it will disappear of itself as soon as you have a wife. The young lady is a fool and her head will have to be set right."

Härdteck defended her and begged the colonel to attempt nothing that might offend or compromise her. The colonel consented at last, but said, "You must be helped. Ask the doctor for advice; perhaps he knows some way to banish your unbidden companion."

The captain, although he felt convinced that medical skill would avail nothing in this case, followed the colonel's advice and spent half a year in trying useless medicines. Then he refused further physical remedies and declared that he regarded his condition as fated; he would have to bear it until it changed of itself.

The colonel said, "Well, do as you wish; but I will make one more attempt myself. When I lived in the capital" he continued, "I once met a man who, without the least boastfulness and in all seriousness stated that he had attained the gift of knowing all things; he therefore asked all those who found that human wisdom would not avail in unusual matters to turn to him for the advice or help which he could give. I will write to him, and if his words were not mere nothings perhaps he can help us."

He wrote the same day. Shortly he received this answer:

"The condition of your friend, which you have described, is a peculiar one. It originates in a too great conscientiousness, in that the captain doubts that the better nature of man can be joined to the life of a soldier. In consequence of this conflict two beings have been developed within him; one a soldier and the other an ordinary human being; these two would like to become one, but the indecision of the person prevents them. Greet your friend in my name and tell him he should befriend himself more with his ghostly companion and endeavor to become one with him in order that the latter may become absorbed in and make a completed man of him.

Then he will see that true human worth excludes no calling and confines itself to no garb, but manifests itself where the inner life releases itself from the external and gives to the latter the laws of thought and action. If your friend takes the contents of this letter to heart and carries them into practice, it will be well for him from time to time to give me news of how it stands with him, so that in case he should go astray I can set him right again."

This letter made a great impression upon the captain and he exclaimed: "He speaks of an inner life! Is not the apparition which has come to me perhaps the beginning of that? I will follow his advice and see what comes of it."

Härdteck kept his promise. The figure which for a long time had kept at his side at last changed its position and appeared before him, turned itself around with the circle of his thoughts and gradually began to think and to speak within him.

"Man is a wondrous creature" he said to himself; "spiritual and divine is his nature when his inner life awakens; but dead without this, however much of acquired theories he may have taken up. I perceive that now I am on the way to truth, and my first duty is to thank my friend and the teacher whom I found through him."

Theosophical Aspects of Contemporary Literature.

The strong tendency of the present age towards an interest in Theosophy and Occultism is manifest in the marked attention given to such subjects in contemporary literature, and also in the way in which the writers' minds often appear to be unconsciously influenced by the thoughts in this direction that are "in the air." The prevalence of theosophical thought are evident in the fiction of the day, as in writing of a philosophical character. That readers of The Path may be enabled to refer to certain of these articles, it is proposed to chronicle briefly from time to time such as would be likely to interest them. In the cases of some of those mentioned herewith, we cannot give the exact date of their publication, but reference to the tables of contents of the various periodicals will enable those who have access to public or private libraries to turn to them with little trouble.

Various essays by George Frederic Parsons on sociological aspects of modern civilization, among them "The Decline of Duty," and "The

Growth of Materialism," in several numbers of the *Atlantic Monthly* for 1886-7. These articles are notable as showing the practical application of theosophical teachings to a consideration of the ordinary affairs of life, and evince careful study on a high plane of thought. It seems, however, as if the author did not always take a sufficient number of factors into account in order to arrive at correct conclusions, there being often counterbalancing elements which might justify a less gloomy view of the course of our civilization, although the shadows are as black as he depicts them. Mr. Parsons is a prominent New York journalist and a member of the Theosophical Society.

"The Peckster Professorship," a brilliant short story by J. P. Quincy; *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1886. This story is founded on thought-transference and kindred phenomena, and has a sequel in the *Atlantic* for June, 1887, called "A Crucial Test." Mr. Quincy's attitude is that of one who, by careful investigation, has been firmly convinced of the scientific justification of a belief in the actuality of the order of phenomena known as "occult." They contain some keen satire on the attitude of the great body of scientific men towards such subjects. The rebuke of Harvard University for its course in this respect is particularly significant, coming as it does from a grandson of Josiah Quincy, one of the most eminent presidents of Harvard.

In the same number of the *Atlantic* as the former of these, we believe, is a story called "The Blindman's World," by E. W. Bellamy, being an imaginary account of an astronomer whose astral body was conveyed to the planet Mars through continued thought about that member of our solar system. There he found that the operation of the memories of the inhabitants was mainly into the future, and this idea is most beautifully worked up. The title of the story refers to the designation of our own world by the Martian inhabitants on account of their deficiency in this respect.

"The Strange Story of Pragtna," by Harvard B. Rooke (Rev. Brooke Herford, of Boston); *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1886. A plausibly written burlesque of tales of Indian magic, pretending to be an account of a Yogi who was buried when Alexander the Great invaded India and resurrected a few years ago.

In the "Contributors' Club" of the same magazine for February of this year is an article called "Anima Mundi," in which the writer imagines that if we could form an idea of the aspect of the Soul of the World, it would be found to be composed of the features of all who had ever lived upon it, as a composite photograph is formed by the features of various persons.

"The Soul of the Far East," by Perceval Lowell; *Atlantic Monthly*,

September, 1887—This is the first of a series of papers devoted to a careful psychical study of the Japanese, Coreans and Chinese. The author is a young Bostonian who spent some time in the Orient and is an exceptionally graceful writer. This paper is devoted to "Personality" and will repay reading by all students of Oriental thought.

"Hypnotic Moralization," by Rev. William Wilberforce Newton. *Harper's Monthly*, August, 1887. A brief paper, setting forth the idea, suggested by recent experiments, of hypnotizing men and women of evil disposition, or vicious and depraved children, and implanting a tendency and will towards good in them. The article appears to have been caused by the reading of an essay by F. W. H. Myers, of the London Psychical Research Society, in the Fortnightly Review for November, 1885.

"Through what Historical Channels did Buddhism influence Early Christianity?" by General J. G. R. Furlong. *The Open Court*, Aug. 18, Sept. 1, 1887. A scholarly essay showing careful research and giving in concise form the evidences on the subject, affording strong proof of the influence of Buddhism in the shaping of the Christian religion.

"Mental Healing and Christian Science," by Rev. J. M. Buckley, D. D. *The Century*, July, 1887. Dr. Buckley shows up the extravagances and absurd pretensions of many of the followers of the variously named methods for the mental treatment of disease which, nevertheless, with all one-sidedness and erratic theories, have a remarkable germ of truth at the basis. Dr. Buckley, who had an article on the same general subject about a year ago in *The Century*, is too dogmatic and "evangelical" to write scientifically.

TEA TABLE TALK.

The following curious experience is one among the many coming under our notice, and is a fair specimen of the numerous psychic states—all of them most unsatisfactory and unreliable—which arise to puzzle the advancing student of occultism.

DEAR JULIUS:—

Some strange things are happening. They flit like swallows through my sky, with just that accentuated dip and dart, so that I may be sure they *were* there. To find words—form for the formless—this is not easy, but I try. I may be sitting down, whether listening to music, working, reading, idling in the dusk: or I am lying down, in night or daytime, alone or in company. Suddenly I fall into a subjective state, and events take place, clear and complete. I am then living these events, yet not I, not this body, but the *Thinker* in me is there engaged as witness to some transaction in some other physical

body. The event drops down before me like an opened scroll and is as suddenly rolled up again as if the soul started out of a dream. I am left with a peculiar bewilderment, as if dropped from the clouds and *plantée là*. Whether the psychic event be long or short, the real time occupied by it cannot be more than a brief flash, for when such occur in company I find that I have excited no remark. Naturally this very fact startles me, for I have been so long and so far away! **Here is one such event.**

I am in the library: my family converses about me. All at once, there is a tent. A general sits at a table with maps before him, over which he bends. An officer, booted and spurred, stands before him. *"I" am in this officer as the Thinker in his brain, yet an independent witness of the scene.* I hear the conversation, which when the scene has passed I perfectly remember, but do not understand, owing to military terms. The officer understands it, and "I" seem also to do so at the moment, but when it has gone only the words remain, and are to me (the normal "me") meaningless, relating to the tactics of war. The general questions; the officer replies. The general is a Prince or Sovereign as well. I do not see his face, as it bends over the maps, nor am I anxious to do so, for I am his officer, I know him very well. Nor do I see the officer, but *I feel him*; his body is moulded about me and I feel the shape of his limbs, all peculiar in their graceful modeling: they are rather short, arms less so in proportion than the legs. The chest very broad and firm. He has dark clustering curls of hair; as I listen it tickles the ear and distracts my attention. He doesn't seem to mind, but I wish he would rub that ear and put an end to the tickling. I call his hair dark because I feel a **heavy dark shadow about his head.**

The officer and I have been acting: he relates what he has done. Platoons, squadrons have been moved, military movements are technically described; accoutrements, rations, all the detail of military life *en grand*. As he speaks, I see it all in his brain, and as he tells of one battle in which he commanded, and how he rode over the field afterward, and describes the victory and the loss, I see the harrowing scene (especially one hideous group) so clearly that for days after it floats before my eyes. We were much moved and saddened by it, and I am also aware that the General must by no means learn this. Suddenly it strikes me—"Why! I don't understand this talk; it's about trigonometry."—and all's gone, and there am I, in the midst of my conversing family, open-mouthed and a puzzle in my eyes. At such times though intensely absorbed in the scene, I am always quite awake.

Again. In a dwelling of a kind I have never seen, the walls covered with rich draperies, partly open and showing the night sky. I am in company with a number of philosophers clad in flowing robes, discussing "theorems," whatever they are. (Meant to look it up but haven't time now.) I "come to," with all the terms in my mind and yet oddly enough, I have not understood their language, but have seen the panorama of their talk in the brain of the philosopher I inhabit. There are many such scenes, but in all I figure as the Thinker, acting out a part of great interest in entire good faith, until "I" become conscious of some strangeness and contrast it with myself, when presto! it is gone and I am ridiculous. It is as real to me as anything I do, until the finale, which occurs when this present personality obtrudes. Now this question arises; am I remembering the events of my past life in other bodies—"getting back the past"—or not? V.

No, I do not think that the writer is getting back that vast past. For in that development of memory the soul is concerned, and its recollections would confine themselves to the results of past states, to the essence of experience and the like. The soul is engaged in evolution and the causes of evolution, to which the outcome of a life contributes, and not its scenes *per se*. It is knowledge we get back; not a few among billions of passing events, but their

aggregate. In the case of a very high adept this would of course be different; such beings can see back over their whole course. An ordinary man might get back the idea of some single event of overwhelming importance in his past if that event related to his higher life, to his spiritual activities. He would then remember its effect, but scarcely such details as above given, for the soul takes no notes of matter and surrounding objects to it purely mechanical. The inquirer, suddenly passive, saw scenes in the Astral Light, and identified herself with them, and this light was in her brain. It is not well to cultivate such a habit, depending as it does upon perfect passivity, when elementals can show what scene they please: it is even best to look out for such moments and break them up. To see consciously, by an effort of will, is a very different matter. Even so, not much is gained by the unlearned seer. What I perceive as a flashing orb, may be to A, a sound; to B, a perfume; to C, a color; and so on. They correlate and are manifest to each psychic present according to his higher or lower vibration. Sound is probably the highest and taste the lowest. He who has mastered vibration alone understands; he is an Adept.

Another inquirer writes: "I want to tell you of a little experience I had last week. I would call it a dream, but it is unlike any dream I ever had. It was in the night of course, and I thought that I—the real I—was standing by the bedside, looking down at my sleeping form. The whole room was light, yet it did not seem like sunlight; it came from no particular point, it cast no shadows; it seemed to be diffused from, or to pervade, all things equally: it was not colored, like sunlight or gaslight; it seemed white, or silvery. Everything was clearly visible; the furniture, the mosquito bar, the brushes on the toilet-table. The form on the bed I recognized distinctly. It was lying as usual, on the right side, the right arm curved under the pillow, my favorite attitude. I seemed to see it even more clearly, more distinctly than the ordinary reflection in the mirror, for whereas there one only has the reflection of a plane surface, here I saw it as a solid, just as I do other people and could also observe the breathing. This did not last more than, perhaps, thirty seconds, but long enough for me to see the body distinctly, to observe and comment upon the fact that the face had an expression of weariness, to note the light as before remarked and some objects in the room. Then all faded away, and afterwards—tho' how long, of course I don't know—I awoke and it was day. Was this a dream, or did I remember that much of the excursion of my "Astral," and was the light I saw the Astral Light? C."

This inquirer was answered. "I believe that what you saw was the remembrance of what really happened. Your astral self got out—as it always does—and looked back at the body. It is more than quite likely that all that you saw occurred when you were returning to the body, and that is why it was short. We remember distinctly only that which is nearest to us. I think you went out when you fell asleep and then on coming back to wakefulness you kept a recollection of the last few seconds. You do not really forget what you saw and thought while away. It sinks into your upper, or subconscious, or super-conscious mind, from which it will all percolate into the thoughts of your waking state. To remember what happens during sleep, is to be a conscious seer. So we only get these useless glimpses of our returning to the body.

We go away in deep dreamless sleep to other spheres and states, where

we get ideas and so forth, and the way back is through many different states, all having their denizens and obstructions. Besides that, there are two ways to ascend and descend : the direct and indirect. So, much is lost and mixed up on those two roads. Now I talk of actualities and not sentimentally.

We must be patient, because it takes time to find out how to walk, and much time is spent in getting hold of clues. A great deal depends on purity of thought and motive, and breadth of view."

In fact, when we know *how* to walk, the thing is done : Knowledge and the act come together. Observe the method of the mother. She restrains the child while it is too young and feeble to sustain its own weight : where this is neglected the child goes misshapen through life. She does not confuse it with explanation and example. She waits upon its natural instincts and gently fosters these in their due time. She guides it around the obstacles it must learn to avoid ; she does not remove them all, even at the expense of a few tumbles. Oh, my friends ? think of the memory of our mothers, and tell me, would you have teacher, guide or brother to be less tender and less wise than they, with the newly born into real life ? JULIUS.

NOTICE TO INQUIRERS.

Within the mind and heart of every thoughtful individual there exists some vital question unanswered. Some subject is uppermost, and asserts itself obtrusively with greater persistency because he is obliged to deal with it without a visible prospect of a solution of the problem. As the center in a circle so is every individual with regard to his environment. At times it seems impossible for him to pass beyond the circle owing to one unanswered question. In obeying the command to do good we learn that by the interchange of different thoughts, these questions are often solved, sometimes by an unintentional word or phrase, which opens up a new view and starts one thinking in another direction, or in other ways. This interchange of question and answer is not only valuable to the questioner but also for the questioned, and brings both into a closer union of mutual interest. In consequence of this view we express a wish that all who desire will ask their questions, to which an answer will be given. Perhaps not just such an answer as they look for, but it will be a sincere one from the standpoint of the questioned. The answers will be from one who seeks "the small old path"—a student like other mortals, and will be given as such, and not as autocratic or infallible. It is not intended to limit in any way, and all will be responded to, be they Jew, Gentile, Theosophist, Spiritualist, Pagan or Christian. Where permissible a certain portion will be published in THE PATH. The remainder will be answered by letter direct. All communications should be addressed, with return postage, to ZADOK, P. O. Box 2659, N. Y.

Literary Notes.

Japanese Literature.—We have received from Messrs. Z. Sawai and Matsuyama M., from Japan, the "Letters of Kenjiu Kasawara" to Prof. Max Müller, printed in English at Osaka, at the Bukkyo-Sho-ri-Yaku-Shuppan-Sha. Kasawara was a young Japanese Buddhist who studied at Oxford, and afterwards died prematurely on his return home. From the same source we get "*The Temperance*," a unique magazine in Japanese characters, devoted to temperance, started by students in the Buddhist college at Kioto, Japan, known as the Futsukioco of the Western Honganji, Kioto. These young men are anxious to spread Buddhism and have requested us to publish their wish. They would also like short articles upon teetotalism which they will publish in English and Japanese in the magazine. Address them as above.

Lucifer.—The first number of the new Theosophical magazine has an attractive table of contents. The two gifted editors both contribute important articles. Madame Blavatsky tells why the magazine is called "Lucifer", while Mable Collins begins a serial story called "The Blossom and the Fruit; a Tale of Love and Magic." All readers of that beautiful story, "The Idyll of the White Lotus," will follow the development of this novel with eager interest. We learn that it is written in the same way as was that work and also "Through the Gates of Gold," as related in the new preface to the latter, and that it is full of occultism to a remarkable degree. Coming from such a source it must be founded on true occult laws, and not the invented occultism that forms the basis of so many books dealing with the subject. The series of comments on "*Light on the Path*" by the author, are of the greatest importance, being the first authoritative one of the various commentaries occasioned by that noble work. Other articles are: "The History of a Planet," "Notes by an Unpopular Philosopher," "Karma," by Archibald Keightley, and something about Count Tolstoi as "A True Theosophist." Attention is asked to the advertisement of *Lucifer* on our cover, as it was taken from "*Science*," a leading scientific paper in this country.

Dr. Franz Hartmann is an indefatigable literary worker. He has now nearly finished his third book for the year, and has, besides, written a number of articles on Theosophical subjects. The book in question is called *Jehoshua the Prophet of Nazareth*, and treats of the life and times of the founder of the Christian religion, besides devoting considerable attention to the aspects of the Christian churches of to-day. Dr. Hartmann's important work, *The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians*, illustrated with beautiful colored plates, is in the hands of the publishers and will soon appear. Dr. Hartmann had nearly finished a translation of the *Bhagavat-Gita* into German, when he learned that there was already an excellent metrical translation by Boxberger, and abandoned the undertaking. It is to be hoped that German Theosophists will do their best to circulate Boxberger's work.

THE KABBALAH UNVEILED.—Mr. S. L. Macgregor Mathers has translated under the above title, *The Kabbalah Denudata*. It contains, from the Zohar, the Book of Concealed Mystery and the Greater and Lesser Assembly. Comments by the translator are added, put in small type so that the reader cannot mistake them for the text. It is a valuable book because a translation of the *Kabbalah Denudata* has been for a long time needed, and these books have lain buried, for most readers, in the Latin tongue. Mr. Mathers has added an explanatory introduction which will be found very useful, but we cannot say that the comments add a great deal to the text.

In his remarks respecting the pronunciation of the name of Jehovah, he lays too much stress upon the mere sound of the word, in which the right pronunciation does not consist; its pronunciation is not in *sound*, but in the very thing that Mr. Mathers refers to, that is, "*in becoming*," so it is misleading to speak of "20 different mystic pronunciations of the Word." This translation ought to be in the hands of every earnest student, and in each Branch library. For sale by Occult Publishing Co., Boston. 1 vol., demy, 8vo., $3,00.

THEOSOPHICAL ACTIVITIES.

IN INDIA.

The interest in India continues unabated. New branches are being constantly formed. In May Col. H. S. Olcott was enthusiastically received at Bulandshahr, and entertained by Sir Namah Faiz Alikhan Bahadur, K. C. S. I. Before leaving there he formed a Branch called "The Baran T. S.," Baran being the old Hindu name of the town.

On the same occasion, Thakur—or Baron—Ganesh Singh started a Purity Alliance for boys.

At Anantapur the Branch celebrated the Queen's Jubilee by hoisting its flag and distributing alms of rice and money to 200 poor people, followed by a theosophical gathering which ended, as the report says, "with the distribution of sweetmeats, almonds, sandal, pan supari and flowers."

In June Col. Olcott had carried his tour as far north as Lahore, where another new Branch was formed. The depth of interest is indicated by the fact that H. H., the Maharajah of Kashmir, placed his vast Lahore palace at the president's disposal, and the municipal authorities attended to the household arrangements. Posters were all over the city in English, Urdu, Hindi, and Gurmukhi announcing the theosophical programme.

At Hardwar the Prime Minister invited Col. Olcott to an important convention, where resolutions were passed thanking the Theosophical Society for its great services during the past ten years in the cause of truth and religion.

The Buddhist catechism has been translated into Japanese. It is probable that a formal invitation will soon be extended to theosophical leaders to visit Japan.

The high priest of Ceylon, Rev. H. Sumangala, also has written a letter to Col. Olcott adverting to the esteem he holds for our representative there, to whom he says he gave letters of introduction to the Buddhist chiefs at Ratnapura. As Mr. Leadbeater is a believer in Mahatmas, it may seem strange to the readers of Mr. Arnold's book that the high priest was so unusually attentive to a theosophist.

The theosophists of Bellary in India have founded an association for the moral and spiritual advancement of the people, and have also started another Sanscrit school.

Branch societies were started since last report at Monghyr, Behar Provinces, and at Rajmahal in Bengal.

We notice that our old friend Bezonji Aderji, a Parsee lawyer, has become president of the Society at Secunderabad, Deccan.

IN AMERICA.

THE CHICAGO THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY is about beginning its Fall work. During the vacation there were several informal meetings which proved of great interest. This Branch pays attention to both the scientific and psychical sides of Theosophy.

THE RAMAYANA THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY of Chicago, has been organized with Brother W. P. Phelon as president and a good roll of members, several of whom have had considerable experience in "spiritualism," and who think they have found in the theories in vogue in the T. S., the right keys for many problems that have puzzled inquirers. The name taken is a good one; it is a celebrated Sanscrit name and calls before the mind an era of vast spiritual and material knowledge. We hope to see 'ere long many more active Branches in Chicago.

MOHINI M. CHATTERJI, of Calcutta, who has been visiting theosophical friends here for some months, sailed for India last month from Boston.

IN ST. LOUIS, where the *Pranava T. S.* was instituted not long ago, an old secret Branch has resolved to make itself public. Its name is the *Arjuna Theosophical Society*. Bro. Page, who organized the old *Pioneer* Branch which dissolved recently, has been and still is president of the *Arjuna*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

KIOTO, JAPAN, July 30th, 1887.

MR. WILLIAM Q. JUDGE:

GENTLEMAN:—I am very glad to receive your epistle, answering to us: I have taken a great pleasure to read in it, that the story we read in the *Russian News*, is in part true; and I am much interested of your earnest efforts of spreading the pure truth of Buddhism. In Japan, there are the twelve sects, or schools of Buddhism, and their principles are shortly explained in the small book, "A Short History of the Twelve Japanese Buddhist Sects" which I presently send to you.

All the people of this country are the Buddhist believers; but, unhappy to tell, many of them are merely nominal; and the doctrines of the Mahayana school are generally recognised and respected. There are a great may teachers and monks, with few nuns, of our religion, and the temples and monasteries in this land, are numerous and splendid; some of them being really huge and grand; the photographs, which you will find enclosed along with the book, show you some of them.

I have a willingness to tell you and your associates about the principles of Buddhism, as recognised in this country, but as I at present find myself busy, I will write to you about that subject, after some days. Some missionaries from France, England, the United States, and Russia, are endeavoring to Christianised this country but for present their followers are few, and the influence of their religion is very weak upon our society.

Our young Buddhistic men, particularly those of the Shin Shin sect, exhibit a strong spirit to propagate the truth of the great law over the face of the world, and they are making preparation in learning English and other languages.

I have translated your letter, and inserted to some of our news, and I believe that it has made an interesting impression on our Buddhists. We are very desirous to make correspondence respecting to our religion with your associates and other people, so, I want you would kindly publish our wish.

I am translating an essay, titled "A Brief Sketch of the General View of Buddhism in Japan," and I suppose, this would be apt to make the foreign people know of the chief and central principles and dogmas of Buddhism in Japan.

Sir, excuse me of the defective manner in writing. I am, indeed, a baby in English language.

I am, Sir, your humble friend,

MATSUYAMA M.

Address:—

MATSUYAMA M.,

Futsukioco of the Western Honganji (a Buddhist college), Kioto, Japan.

As a person having seen one in a dream, recognizes him afterwards; so does one who has achieved proper concentration of mind perceive the Self.

OM.